(a) whether to promote the growth of tourism in the country, the Union Government propose to select more tourist spots particularly coastline areas in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Union Government had discussions with the States having coastline to promote tourism spots; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (KUMARI SELJA): (a) to (d) Identification and development of tourist spots is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. The Ministry of Tourism, however, provides financial assistance for tourism projects on the basis of proposals received from them subject to availability of funds and inter-se priority. During the current financial year 106 projects for Rs. 398.33 crore have been sanctioned upto September, 2009 for development and promotion of tourism in the country, including the Coastal States.

Konark temple, Odisha

†1635. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether his ministry is aware that stones are coming off from famous Konark Temple of Odisha on a large scale;

(b) if so, measures adopted by Government to protect it;

(c) whether State Government has drawn the attention of Central Government towards this serious issue; and

(d) whether Government have any plan to reintroduce the practice of regular sun worship by making foolproof arrangements of security of famous and sacred Sun Temple?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (c) A high level Technical Committee of Archaeological Survey of India has recently visited the Sun Temple Konark and found that there were no such instances of stones falling. The temple is well protected and conserved.

(d) No, Sir.

Decline of tourists to India

1636. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the number of tourist to India has been reduced substantially in 2008 and 2009 in comparison to 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, if so, the reasons thereof?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI SULTAN AHMED): The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during the years 2004 to 2008 and January-October 2009 and the growth rate in FTAs over the corresponding period of previous year are given below:-

Year	FTAs (in million)	Growth Rate over previous year
2004	3.46	-
2005	3.92	13.3
2006	4.45	13.5
2007	5.08	14.3
2008 *	5.37	5.6
January-October 2009 *	4.02	-7.0

* Provisional

While the number of FTAs during 2004 to 2008 show an increasing trend, there has been a decline in FTAs during the period January-October 2009. This decline may be due to various reasons including H1N1 pandemic, global slowdown, etc.

Domestic and foreign tourists in India and Rajasthan

1637. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:

SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) tourist (domestic/foreign) arrivals during the last three years in India and Rajasthan;

(b) percentage share of Rajasthan thereof;

(c) whether tourist traffic in Rajasthan declined after 13th May, 2008 serial blasts in Jaipur;

(d) whether tourist traffic in India, particularly Maharashtra, declined after 26th November, 2008 attacks in Mumbai;

(e) whether in view of Rajasthan having largest chunk of Thar desert, mountainous sand dunes, which have distinct ecology, flora and fauna, there is great scope for desert tourism (safari, camel ride, adventure tour, etc.); and

(f) if so, whether her Ministry contemplates any scheme for developing a Desert-Circuit in Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI SULTAN AHMED): (a) and (b) The number of domestic and foreign tourist visits to Rajasthan and for all India as well as the share of Rajasthan during 2006, 2007 and 2008 are given below:-